Value of Rupee

286. SHRI NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present value of the rupee in comparison to its value in 1947-48;

(b) how far the value of the rupee has decreased during the last three financial years; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to stabilise the value of the rupee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI): (a) The purchasing power of the Rupee measured as the reciprocal of the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers in August, 1987 (latest available) works out to 9.78 paise with 1947 as the base.

(b) The purchasing power of the rupee on a point to point basis, declined by 4.8 per cent in 1984-85, by 8.15 per cent in 1985-86 and 6.96 per cent in 1986-87.

(c) The anti-inflationary policy being followed by Government includes effective demand and supply management like strengthening of Public Distribution System, allocation of additional stocks of foodgrans to drought affected areas, augmenting domestic availability of essential commodities like sugar, edible oils, pulses and mopping up excess liquidity in the system. The Central Government has also advised the State Governments to take strict action against traders indulging in profiteering, hoarding and blackmarketeering.

Supply of Yarn to Weavers

287. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to supply yarn directly to the weavers at subsidised rates so that they could meet the rising cost of production; and

(b) what steps Government are taking to help the weavers in these drought conditions?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) In order to assist the weavers in drought affected areas, the Central Government have advised the State Governments to incorporate programmes and schemes for relief of distress of handloom weavers in the drought relief proposals prepared by them. In addition, the following instructions have also been issued:

(i) State Government should make firm arrangements for pooling of yarn produced by spinning mills in State/Cooperative Sector, and fix the yarn price at reasonable levels as is being done in Tamil Nadu, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh for supply to the handloom sector.

(ii) State Governments should formulate a long-term plan for supply of raw materials to handloom weavers based on the requirements of the handloom sector and communicate the same to the National Handloom Development Corporation for arranging regular supplies.

(iii) As instructions have been issued to the National Textile Corboration (NTC) to sell yarn at millgate prices to State Handloom Organisations and to open yarn depots, wherever possible, the State Governments should get in touch with NTC for supply of yarn and for opening of yarn depots.

Devaluation of the Rupee

288. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to devalue the rupee in order to augment export; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FIN-

ANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Detentions in Gujarat under Terrorists and Disruptive Activities Act

289. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how many people have been detained so far in Gujarat under the Terrorists and Disruptive Activities Act; and

(b) how many of them are proven terrorists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) 2234 persons have been arrested under the Act in Gujarat.

(b) This would be known after completion of trial.

Condition of Bonded Labour in a Village of Maharashtra

290. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in 'the Hindustan Times' of the 7th September, 1987 to the effect that over 500 families comprising 2,000 men and women from Orissa and Andhra Pradesh bonded nine years ago in a village of Maharashtra are living in inhuman conditions and are suffering from malnutrition;

(b) if so, what are the facts thereof; and

(c) whether any action has since been taken to get them freed from bondage and to provide alternative jobs to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, the responsibility for identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers lies with the concerned State Governments. In the instant case, the State Government of Maharashtra has been requested to take necessary action in the matter and send us a report.

Review of the Working of the Central and State Handicrafts Corporations

291. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a high powered committee was set up last year to review the working of the Central and State Handicrafts Corporations;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has since submitted its report;

(c) if the answer to part (b) above be in the affirmative, what are the essential features of the report; and

(d) what action Government have taken thereon?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Committee submitted its report on 20th August, 1987.

(c) In its report the Committee headed by Shri S. G. Bose Mullick has called for increase in budgetary support from State Governments for their handicrafts corporations and cooperative societies for speeding up the tempo of development of the handicrafts sector.

The 253-page report reviewing production, marketing and export of handicrafts has suggested a framework and programme for the marketing of handicrafts in the decade hence.

The Committee recommends that the Centre should meet up to 75 per cent of the capital expenditure in the